

Washington, DC -- Congresswoman Linda Sánchez (D-CA) pressed Attorney General Michael Mukasey today at a House Judiciary Committee hearing with questions on the validity of Karl Rove's decision to ignore a congressional subpoena and on the Department's lack of leadership in bringing transparency to corporate monitorships.

"I think Attorney General Mukasey knows that the White House has overextended its executive privilege claim," said Congresswoman Sánchez. "But unfortunately we have yet another attorney general who is more interested in towing the party line than bringing a breath of fresh air to the Justice Department."

Earlier this month, former White House adviser Karl Rove refused to testify before Congress about his role in politically motivated actions of the Justice Department. Sánchez, who chairs a subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee ruled to reject the White House's claim that as a former close advisor to the president, Karl Rove is constitutionally immune from having to appear for testimony.

Sánchez also questioned Mukasey on non-prosecution and deferred prosecutions. On the eve of the March 11, 2008 deferred prosecution hearing, the Justice Department released new guidelines, which provided only scant internal rules on pre-trial corporate settlement agreements.

"These were suspiciously timely guidelines that do not provide the transparency and uniformity that is essential for the selection of independent corporate monitors," said Congresswoman Sánchez. "They certainly do not give prosecutors and corporations the guidance they need before entering into deferred or non-prosecution agreements."

In response, Sánchez, along with Congressman Bill Pascrell (D-NJ) and Congressman Frank Pallone (D-NJ) introduced the "Accountability in Deferred Prosecution Act of 2008." The bill requires the Department to issue guidelines and creates a system of oversight for deferred and non-prosecution agreements.

These agreements gained national attention after former Attorney General John Ashcroft gave testimony in front of the Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law, which Sánchez chairs, on a lucrative corporate monitoring contract his firm received as a part of a deferred prosecution agreement.